



A Brief History
of
Honey Creek High School
by

A 1933 Bee
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Several volumes would be required to tell the entire story of the school system in Honey Creek Township from the time this area was settled until 1971 when the Honey Creek High School was no more. Until the passage of the Free School Act in 1860 the schools were either private or those established by the Quaker and the Methodist Churches. Records of schools go back as far as 1815, even before there was a Vigo County or a state of Indiana. The first school recorded in Honey Creek Township was in 1815 and was located near where the Grove School was built later. It was started by George Clem and James Thayer was the first school master.

1921, 1922, and 1923 The Maryland School was under construction during these years. The trustee was Ed Halstead and his advisory board members were F.E. Boyll, F.P. Walton, and Harry Cantrell.

1923-1924 The Maryland School opened its doors. There were only the first two years of high school plus the grades 1-8. Mr. McWilliams was principal and one of the three high school teachers. The others were Rula Barbee and Joyce Furry.

1924-1925 To relieve the overcrowding at Maryland the 7th and 8th grades were sent to Youngstown where they occupied the second floor. At Maryland the garage was also used as a classroom.

1925-1926 Although the building was not quite finished the Honey Creek High School opened its doors. All four years of high school and the 7th and 8th grades were provided for. Ivan Morris was the trustee and his advisory board was composed of John Clem, Hubert Ritter, and Willard Jones. The Prairieton high school pupils became a part of the student body. This move seems only natural as Prairieton Township was originally formed from sections of Honey Creek and Prairie Creek Townships back in 1857. Eight teachers formed the faculty of the Honey Creek High School. On May 30, 1926 the Bacalaureate Service was held at the Farmer's Chapel Church and the Commencement Exercises were at the Mt. Pleasant Church on June 2, 1926. Eighteen proud young men and women received their diplomas.

1926-1927 One more teacher was added to the faculty. The senior class was composed of sixteen members. This class published the first year-book and they included pictures of the class of 1926. They also laid the foundation for the Alumni Scholarship Fund. This year also saw the first Pest Drive by the Aggies and presentation of a Minstrel Show.

1927-1928 This was the year that the gymnasium, an assembly room, two classrooms and a rest room were added to the west side of the school. The curriculum included a full scale Physical Education program for all students. The Senior Class had eighteen members. Mr. J. Ord Fortner became the new Principal. The faculty consisted of the following teachers: Otho J. Price, Cecil Armstrong, George Klatte, Marion Beckwith, George Keever, Charlotte Altekruze, Ernest Cook, Joyce Furry and Harry Dowell. Mr. Dowell was the orchestra leader and Mrs. Moon directed the chorus.

1928-1929 The Agriculture Building was constructed during this school year.

1930 through 1938 During the thirties not too many changes took place except for the increase class size, more teachers added to the faculty, and more participation with other county schools. This was evident in the physical education activities and in the music program. Money wasn't too plentiful but somehow we all managed to survive and have fun along the way. The Class of 1931 established an endowment fund which would enable the scholarship to be given each year using the interest from the principal investment. The Class of 1932 had its Senior Band and the Class of '33 was the largest class up to that time. Thirty-nine received diplomas that year. The rest of the classes in the thirties made their mark in one way or another in music, sports, agriculture, and home economics. The 4-H Clubs were very active and Honey Creek took their share of winnings. The Class of 1934 participated in the first Annual County Musical Festival. The orchestra and the chorus took part and Malcolm McPheeters played a cornet solo.

1959 We will go now to the year 1959. At the close of the term of Richard Beckwith and the beginning of August Montgomery's term a new high school building was completed. The old building became a junior high school. On October 19, 1959 a dedication service was held with over 1200 people in attendance. The Terre Haute newspaper had a picture of August Montgomery receiving the key from Wm. Nilson, president of the Honey Creek Building Corporation. Honor guests included Richard Beckwith and his Advisory Board: Paul Gummere, Walter Halstead and James Hipkiss. August Montgomery and his board, Sam Boyll, Wendell Henry, and Noval Nicoson. The cost of the new building was \$639,800.

1965 On July 17, 1965 the old building burned and for the next six years the junior high students were transported to Sarah Scott.

1971 This was the last year for Honey Creek High School to operate as such. It became a junior high school and the high school students went to South Vigo. All of this change came about primarily as a result of the re-organization of the entire Indiana school system. This re-organization took place in the sixties. As a result the township schools were further consolidated into larger units and their control went from the township and his advisory board to a central school board for the entire county. As in any drastic change the results were both good and bad. A broader curriculum could be offered but the interesting competition between the various township schools went out the window and the Honey Creek basketball boys found themselves playing on a team with boys they had competed with in the past. The introduction of Federal funds into the schools also made a difference in their operation as did the shift of population in different parts of the county.

Honey Creek High School had undergone many changes in the almost fifty years of its existence. In the year 1967 Honey Creek High School was the first high school in Vigo County to carry a First Class Commission granted by the Indiana Commissioner in General Education and the Indiana Board of Education. This may have been a surprise to some but for us who attended and graduated from Honey Creek High School it was no surprise.. We knew it was Number One from the beginning.

Author's Notes--I would like to thank all of the people whose memory I probed for information. Sam Boyll, Marabelle Watson, Elvira Rigney, Maxine Beckwith, James Sutliff, Max Wright, Alfred Klatte, and others who may not have realized why I was asking so many questions. The Vigo County Library and the Vigo County School Corporation were also valuable sources of information. There are many gaps in the history but perhaps each of you can add your notes to get the complete picture.

Firsts and Near Firsts for Honey Creek High School

One of the first townships outside Terre Haute City to consolidate into larger units and build larger schools:

The first township in Vigo County to have vocational education: A separate shop building was built. It was constructed mainly by the "Aggie Boys" under the direction of O.J.Price and other men teachers.

One of the first schools to have hot lunches: This was continuous from the start. At the high school building the meals were at first prepared on an old coal stove and served in the basement. A new cafeteria was built in 1948 and it ranked high in the state for its fine food service.

The first township to have transportation of school children: This began in 1897 at the Grove school. Michael Ryan, grandfather of the Ryan boys of our era, was the "Hack" driver.

One of the first townships to offer a Physical Education program for grades 7 through 12:

The class of 1926 was the first class to graduate from a high school in Honey Creek Township. There were eighteen graduates and that next fall eleven were enrolled in college. Three were teaching in Honey Creek schools the following year. Three early high school teachers are still living. They are: Marion Beckwith, Charlotte Altekruise, and Rula Barbee.

The first graduating classes established a scholarship fund. A twenty-five dollar scholarship was given each year to an outstanding student.

The Class of 1927 published the first school annual. It was called The Honeycomb. It was dedicated to George Klatte, their class sponsor. After Mr. Klatte left Honey Creek he quit teaching and farmed until his death. Alfred Klatte brought the writer the 1927 and 1928 annuals to help in tracing the class histories. Alfred is Mr. Klatte's son.

Honey Creek was one of the first schools to have clubs for out-of-class activities for the students. Some of these were: Dramatics Club, Agriculture Club, The Homemakers, Boy Scouts, Campfire Girls, and G.A.A. for girls interested in athletics.

Those Who Paved The Way

Trustees from about 1900 to the present:

Henry Joslin	Ed Kerr
Tom Anderson	Parke Sutliff
Jess Burnett	Buel Watson
Ed Halstead	Richard Beckwith
Ivan Morris	August Montgomery
Perry Tucker	Charles Beckwith

The exact dates of tenure for some were not known by the writer.

School Bus Drivers in 1927,1928

Ollie Myles, George Schell, Harry Miller, Charley Arvin, Edward McNeily, Walter Dawson, William Menning, Clarence Montgomery, Paul McPheeters, Charley Harlan, George Ditto, Carl Hunt, William Jones, Hillman Rigney, Edward Bailey, William Pollit, Dave Trimmer, Loren Siner, and Fred Farmer.

Principals of Honey Creek High School

C.K. McWilliams	Mr. Baylor	William Ray
J.Ord Fortner	Ray Stuffle	
Louis Kitch	Mr. Broadhead	
J.Ord Fortner	Lloyd Wagner	
Mr. Richards	Carl Riddle	

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The Things We Remember

The Pest Drives organized by O.J.Price

The Spelling Bees for both students and parents

Mr. Fortner's Chapel Exercises

The high school romances

All of the steps we had to go up and down for our classes

The forbidden dancing at the store during the noon hour

The 1932 Senior Band and the fun they had

Smoking behind the Ag Building

How hard we worked to win the basketball games

How hard the teachers worked to make us learn something worthwhile

If there are mistakes in this sketchy history you have my permission to correct them. It has been a joy to dig into the past for a short while.